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Report # 10646: Fully Online Distance Education Program Registration
Submitted by the Maryland Higher Education Commission
December 1, 2017

Executive Summary

Education Article §11-202.2(g) of the Annotated Code of Maryland requires the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) to submit to the Governor, and in accordance with §2-1246 of the State Government Article, the General Assembly, an annual fully online distance education program registration report. This report shall include:

I. The number of institutions of higher education that apply for registration under this section;

II. The type and size of the institutions that apply;

III. The number of institutions approved for registration;

IV. The number of institutions denied registration;

V. The number of Maryland students enrolled in institutions required to register under this section;

VI. The results of the requirements of §11-202.3 of this subtitle;

VII. The number of institutions found to be in violation of the requirement to register under this section;

VIII. Any fines imposed, and in what amounts, on institutions that violate this section; and

IX. Any fine revenues collected from institutions for violation of this section.

Please note that effective January 1, 2016, the State of Maryland became a full participant in the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (NC-SARA). As such, an institutional participant in NC-SARA is exempt from the requirements for Registration of Online Programs in Maryland (COMAR13B.05.01). Additionally, effective January 1, 2016, Maryland's definition of operating in Maryland (COMAR 13B.02.01.03B(12)(c)) was amended to allow an out of state institution to place no more than 10 students in a single program, physically present at a single site in the State in a supervised internship, practicum, or field experience as a required part of a degree or certificate program. If more than ten students from a single program at an out of state institution are placed at a single site in the State in a supervised internship, practicum, or field placement, then the institution must submit an application for a certificate of approval to operate in Maryland.

Membership in NC-SARA has completely altered the online higher education landscape in the United States and Maryland. Presently, there are 48 NC-SARA member states and the District of Columbia with approximately 1500 participating institutions. Only California and Massachusetts are not NC-SARA member states. All NC-SARA member institutions may enroll Maryland students in an online program with no need to register the program with the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC). With the majority of institutions participating in NC-

SARA, the number of out-of-state registration applications for Maryland has dropped precipitously for the second year in a row.

During the 2016-2017 reporting period (November 1 through October 31), MHEC received a total of 26 registration applications, including 3 initial applications and 23 renewal applications. The previous reporting periods included 165 applications for 2015-2016 and 247 applications for 2014 – 2015.

During the current reporting period, the Secretary of Higher Education issued registration approvals to 26 out-of-state institutions. (Note: Registrations are still being accepted and processed for 2016 – 2017. Processing delays often occur when applications are missing vital information or documentation, and MHEC staff must work directly with institutional liaisons to ensure compliance.) During the 2016 - 2017 reporting period, MHEC collected a total of $15,000 in registration. MHEC staff members continue to provide guidance and necessary support to out of state institutions that require a certificate of approval to operate in Maryland by meeting the threshold of operating in Maryland.

Responses

I.   Number of institutions that applied during the reporting period: **26 (3 Initial and 23 Renewal)**

II.   Type and size of institutions that applied:

Types of institutions that applied for registration with the Maryland Higher Education Commission

Type	Number of applicants for registration
Public	3
Private-for-profit	8
Private not-for-profit	15

Sizes of institutions that applied for registration with the Maryland Higher Education Commission[1]

Very small two-year[2]	0	Small two-year[3]:	1
Medium two-year[4]	0	Large two-year[5]	0
Very large two-year[6]	0	Very small four-year, primarily nonresidential[7]	1
Very small four-year, primarily residential[8]	4	Very small four-year, highly residential[9]	0
Small four-year, primarily nonresidential[10]	1	Small four-year, primarily residential[11]	3
Small four-year, highly residential[12]	0	Medium four-year, primarily nonresidential[13]	0
Medium four-year, primarily residential[14]	3	Medium four-year, highly residential[15]	0
Large four-year, primarily nonresidential[16]	3	Large four-year, primarily residential[17]	5
Large four-year, highly residential[18]	0	Special Focus Institution	1
Not classified	4		

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[1] Based on Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education

[2] Fall enrollment data show full time equivalent (FTE) enrollment of fewer than 500 students at these associate's degree granting institutions.

[3] Fall enrollment data show FTE enrollment of 500–1,999 students at these associate's degree granting institutions.

[4] Fall enrollment data show FTE enrollment of 2,000–4,999 students at these associate's degree granting institutions.

[5] Fall enrollment data show FTE enrollment of 5,000–9,999 students at these associate's degree granting institutions.

[6] Fall enrollment data show FTE enrollment of at least 10,000 students at these associate's degree granting institutions.

[7] Fall enrollment data show FTE enrollment of fewer than 1,000 degree-seeking students at these bachelor's degree granting institutions. Fewer than 25 percent of degree-seeking undergraduates live on campus and/or fewer than 50 percent attend full time (includes exclusively distance education institutions).

[8] Fall enrollment data show FTE enrollment of fewer than 1,000 degree-seeking students at these bachelor's degree granting institutions. 25-49 percent of degree-seeking undergraduates live on campus and at least 50 percent attend full time.

[9] Fall enrollment data show FTE enrollment of fewer than 1,000 degree-seeking students at these bachelor's degree granting institutions. At least half of degree-seeking undergraduates live on campus and at least 80 percent attend full time.

[10] Fall enrollment data show FTE enrollment of 1,000–2,999 degree-seeking students at these bachelor's degree granting institutions. Fewer than 25 percent of degree-seeking undergraduates live on campus and/or fewer than 50 percent attend full time (includes exclusively distance education institutions).

[11] Fall enrollment data show FTE enrollment of 1,000–2,999 degree-seeking students at these bachelor's degree granting institutions. 25-49 percent of degree-seeking undergraduates live on campus and at least 50 percent attend full time.

[12] Fall enrollment data show FTE enrollment of 1,000–2,999 degree-seeking students at these bachelor's degree granting institutions. At least half of degree-seeking undergraduates live on campus and at least 80 percent attend full time.

[13] Fall enrollment data show FTE enrollment of 3,000–9,999 degree-seeking students at these bachelor's degree granting institutions. Fewer than 25 percent of degree-seeking undergraduates live on campus and/or fewer than 50 percent attend full time (includes exclusively distance education institutions).

[14] Fall enrollment data show FTE enrollment of 3,000–9,999 degree-seeking students at these bachelor's degree granting institutions. 25-49 percent of degree-seeking undergraduates live on campus and at least 50 percent attend full time.

[15] Fall enrollment data show FTE enrollment of 3,000–9,999 degree-seeking students at these bachelor's degree granting institutions. At least half of degree-seeking undergraduates live on campus and at least 80 percent attend full time.

[16] Fall enrollment data show FTE enrollment of at least 10,000 degree-seeking students at these bachelor's degree granting institutions. Fewer than 25 percent of degree-seeking undergraduates live on campus and/or fewer than 50 percent attend full time (includes exclusively distance education institutions).

[17] Fall enrollment data show FTE enrollment of at least 10,000 degree-seeking students at these bachelor's degree granting institutions. 25-49 percent of degree-seeking undergraduates live on campus and at least 50 percent attend full time.

[18] Fall enrollment data show FTE enrollment of at least 10,000 degree-seeking students at these bachelor's degree granting institutions. At least half of degree-seeking undergraduates live on campus and at least 80 percent attend full time.

III. Number of institutions approved for registration in the reporting period: **26**

IV. Number of institutions denied registration: **0**

V. Number of Maryland students enrolled at institutions required to register: **4218**

VI. Results of the requirements of §11-202.3 of this subtitle:

§11-202.3 At least twice a year, the Commission shall peruse federal databases and other information sources to determine whether there are Maryland students who are enrolled in a fully online distance education program offered by an institution of higher education that is required to register with the Commission under § 11–202.2 of this subtitle, but that has failed to register with the Commission.

During the prior reporting period, MHEC continued its investigatory efforts in compliance with §11-202.3, including follow-up with institutions accredited by the Distance Education and Training Council (DETC) that had not yet applied for registration in Maryland, and institutions identified through the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) as both having Maryland students enrolled and as offering distance education. These efforts included letters sent to over 800 colleges and universities and resulted in an additional 101 online registration applications received for the prior year. MHEC staff members continue to follow up with non-responding institutions to determine their status, as well as work with out-of-state institutional liaisons to facilitate the submission of new applications. These efforts were not fruitful for the present year due to the full operation of NC-SARA and the vast number of institutions now with NC-SARA membership.

MHEC remains committed to online program registration compliance for out of state institutions. Following the enacting of legislation and adoption of regulations and the approval of Maryland's NC-SARA application by the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), Maryland became a member of the National Council State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (NC-SARA). In January 2016, MHEC began implementing NC-SARA, and since that time MHEC has realigned internal processes to operate a dual track of compliance for online programs that fall under SARA and those requiring registration, in accordance with Maryland regulations. In the instance that an institution is identified as noncompliant or nonresponsive with registration requirements, MHEC staff will investigate the institution's website to determine if it has revised and published its policies on enrolling Maryland students after having received notice that registration with MHEC is required. Following the successful results of the investigatory letters that were sent out by MHEC, some institutions voluntarily contacted MHEC staff to inquire about out of state online registration procedures or, more often, to announce their participation in NC-SARA. MHEC continues to identify the institutions that are located in a NC-SARA state and are a NC-SARA approved institution to determine whether an institution should be identified for further enforcement action (i.e., needing a certificate of approval to operate because the program requirements meet the definition of operating in Maryland).

Table 1 and Table 2 illustrates the impact of the implementation of NC-SARA in 48 states.

Table 1 presents the enrollments of Maryland students in institutions from other states that are participating members of NC-SARA. These 719 NC-SARA non-Maryland participating institutions enrolled 31,594 Maryland students for 2016 - 2017.

Table 1: SARA Enrollment of Maryland Students 2016-2017

State Enrolling Maryland Students Online for 2016 - 2017	Number of Maryland Students Enrolled in Online Courses	Number of Institutions Enrolling Maryland Students in Online Courses
Alabama	635	14
Alaska	3	1
Arizona	5251	21
Arkansas	21	5
Colorado	1295	27
Connecticut	151	8
District of Columbia	4395	9
Delaware	497	4
Georgia	1371	23
Hawaii	10	2
Idaho	145	6
Illinois	483	34
Indiana	380	21
Iowa	1003	17
Kansas	353	21
Kentucky	166	18
Louisiana	51	9
Maine	98	7
Michigan	150	22
Minnesota	1307	23
Mississippi	49	8
Missouri	366	28
Montana	16	3
Nebraska	170	14
Nevada	2	2
New Hampshire	1188	6
New Jersey	469	8
New Mexico	47	10
New York	1265	33
North Carolina	105	10

North Dakota	56	8
Ohio	505	34
Oklahoma	133	11
Oregon	219	13
Pennsylvania	1329	54
Rhode Island	30	4
South Carolina	63	13
South Dakota	44	4
Tennessee	91	24
Texas	274	41
Utah	1015	9
Vermont	173	8
Virginia	2458	34
Washington	29	8
West Virginia	3670	21
Wisconsin	62	18
Wyoming	1	1
TOTALS	**31594**	**719**

Note: Florida reported zero enrollments reported due to late membership in NC-SARA; California and Massachusetts are not NC-SARA member states.

Maryland currently has 22 institutions participating in NC-SARA. Table 2 presents the enrollment of students from other states in online courses at Maryland institutions. Maryland enrolled 12,493 students from the other 47 participating NC-SARA states and the District of Columbia. These results are for the 2016 – 2017 NC-SARA reporting period. Information for Tables 1 and 2 was extracted for this report from the NC-SARA 2016 – 2017 Enrollment Report.

Table 2: Maryland Institutions SARA Enrollment 2016-2017

Name of Institution	SARA Enrollment from Other States
Anne Arundel Community College	70
Capitol Technology University	176
Cecil College	16
Frostburg State University	127
Goucher College	32
Harford Community College	18
Howard Community College	11

Johns Hopkins University	4710
Loyola University Maryland	18
McDaniel College	0
Montgomery College	53
Notre Dame of Maryland University	41
Salisbury University	27
Stevenson University	78
Towson University	37
University of Baltimore	42
University of Maryland - Baltimore	124
University of Maryland - Baltimore County	70
University of Maryland - College Park	233
University of Maryland - Eastern Shore	0
University of Maryland - University College	6605
Washington Adventist University	5
TOTAL	**12493**

VII.   Number of institutions found to be in violation of the requirement to register: **0**

In the past, a number of institutions were found to be in violation of the requirement to register as a result of MHEC's investigatory efforts summarized in Section VI. They were deemed in violation since it was determined that these non-registered institutions were already enrolling Maryland residents in fully online programs. However, as of this report, fewer institutions have been found to be in violation of these requirements and most, if not almost all, institutions that offer online education to students outside their home state have joined NC-SARA and are no longer required to register as out-of-state institutions. Consequently, no fines have been imposed on any institutions during the reporting period.

VIII.   Any fines imposed, and in what amounts, on institutions that were found to be in violation: **0**

IX.   Any fine revenues collected from institutions found to be in violation: **0**

Conclusion

Since 2015, MHEC has seen continued decreases in the number of applications submitted through the out-of-state online registration process as a result of Maryland's participation in NC-SARA. However, reporting of student enrollment in online programs has significantly increased with the implementation of and participation in NC-SARA. To date, 48 states and the District of

Columbia have joined NC-SARA. There are approximately 1,500 current individual colleges and universities that participate in NC-SARA. During this same period, MHEC has approved 22 Maryland institutions for membership in NC-SARA. Maryland's NC-SARA application was approved in 2015 and was recently renewed in 2017. MHEC began implementing the agreement on January 1, 2016. MHEC has seen a corresponding decrease in revenues for both online registration and out-of-state certificates of approval. MHEC continues to expect a decrease in revenues. However, MHEC has offset a portion of these losses by charging in-state institutions an annual participation fee for NC-SARA. An education analyst position coordinates both the online registration process and NC-SARA portal agency responsibilities at MHEC.

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MHEC
Creating a state of achievement

General Education Requirements for Public Institutions in Maryland*
COMAR Revisions Effective August 1, 2017
http://www.dsd.state.md.us/comar/comarhtml/13b/13b.06.01.03.htm

Implementation Guidance

SIDE-BY-SIDE COMPARISON	
Prior to August 1, 2017	**Effective August 1, 2017**
One course in each of two disciplines in arts and humanities	Two courses in arts and humanities
One course in each of two disciplines in social and behavioral sciences	Two courses in social and behavioral sciences
Two science courses, at least one of which shall be a laboratory course	Two science courses, at least one of which shall be a laboratory course
One course in mathematics at or above the level of college algebra	One course in mathematics, having performance expectations demonstrating a level of mathematical maturity beyond the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards in Mathematics (including problem-solving skills, and mathematical concepts and techniques that can be applied in the student's program of study)
One course in English composition	One course in English composition, completed with a grade of C- or better
Interdisciplinary and Emerging Issues (1) In addition to the five required areas in §A of this regulation, a public institution may include up to 8 semester hours in a sixth category that addresses emerging issues that institutions have identified as essential to a full program of general education for students. These courses may be integrated into other general education courses or may be presented as separate courses; and include courses that: Provide an interdisciplinary examination of issues across the five areas; or Address other categories of knowledge, skills, and values that lie outside of the five areas.	**Institution-Specific Requirements** (1) In addition to the five required areas in §A of this regulation, a public institution may include up to 8 semester hours in course work outside the five areas. These courses may be integrated into other general education courses or may be presented as separate courses. Examples include, but are not limited to, Health, Diversity, and Computer Literacy. (2) Public institutions may not include the courses in this section in a general education program unless they provide academic content and rigor equivalent to the areas in §A(1) of this regulation.

General Education Credits Required:	General Education Credits Required:
A.A. and A.S. 30-36	A.A. and A.S. 28-36
A.A.S. At least 20	A.A.S. At least 18
Baccalaureate 40-46	Baccalaureate 38-46
	*Note: The 4-year institution may require 48 semester hours of required core courses if courses upon which the institution's curriculum is based carry 4 semester hours

Arts and Humanities/Social and Behavioral Sciences

The required categories of arts and humanities, and, social and behavioral sciences no longer require that the student complete a course in two different disciplines.

Institutions may, however, continue to require that students complete two different disciplines within each category. It should be noted that for students who have completed their general education requirements at the sending institution, receiving institutions are obligated to transfer and apply the courses towards the receiving institution's general education requirements. A completed general education program shall transfer without further review or approval by the receiving institution and without the need for a course-by-course match.

For example, a student has completed all of the general education requirements at their first institution, part of which are two psychology courses in fulfillment of the social and behavioral sciences requirement. The student then transfers to an institution that requires students to complete two courses, one in each of two different disciplines. The receiving institution must accept all of the general education credits, and must apply the two psychology courses in fulfillment of the social and behavioral sciences requirement. If, however, the receiving institution requires three courses in social and behavioral sciences with at least two disciplines represented, the student may be required to complete the third course in a discipline other than psychology or to complete a specific course, as long as the student is not required to take more than 10-18 additional credits of general education , with the total general education credits do not exceed the maximum credits permitted (36 at the two-year institution or 46-48 at the four-year institution).

Science
Unchanged.

Mathematics
Definition revised for clarification.

English Composition – Minimum Grade Requirement
Effective August 1, 2017, students must complete the English composition requirement with a grade of "C-" or better.

Students who have earned a grade of "D" in English Composition prior to August 1, 2017 and have been continuously enrolled (no break in enrollment longer than two regular semesters, i.e. a Fall and Spring semester) will be able to transfer the English composition credits toward

general education. However, this provision does not relieve the student of the requirement for achieving a higher grade to meet academic program requirements or course prerequisites.

*General Education at Maryland Independent Colleges and Universities
The general education requirements presented here from COMAR 13B.06.01.04 apply only to public two-year and four-year institutions in Maryland. Each independent college and university in Maryland offers a comprehensive program of undergraduate general education aligned with its mission. General education requirements for Maryland's independent institutions are addressed in COMAR 13B.02.02.16E. General education courses completed at Maryland public institutions will be reviewed for transfer by Maryland independent four-year institutions in accordance with their transfer policies and any existing articulation agreements between the institutions. Maryland's independent colleges and universities currently have over 140 articulation agreements with Maryland community colleges, and nine participate in the State's ARTSYS course and program articulation system.

(This document was reviewed and approved by the Maryland Higher Education Student Transfer Advisory Council; Last Updated: September 20, 2017)